

Read the News—
Then the "Wants"

NEW YORK JOURNAL

AND ADVERTISER.

NO. 5,863.

Copyright, 1898, by W. R. Hearst.—NEW YORK, MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1898.—12 PAGES.

PRICE ONE CENT In Greater New York; Elsewhere, TWO CENTS.

WEATHER.

For New York City and vicinity: Heavy rain or snow, northeast winds; decidedly colder.
For New York, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania and Connecticut: Much colder, rain turning to snow.
The highest temperature yesterday was 50 degrees at 11 p. m.
The lowest temperature yesterday was 38 degrees at 3 a. m.



CONGRESS TO-DAY; MOST IMPORTANT SESSION IN YEARS.

Nicaragua Canal
Sure to Come
Up in Senate.

Hawaii Likely to
Develop a Hot
Fight.

Both Houses Eagerly Await the
President's Message---Routine
Bills to Have First Call.

BIG MATTERS FOR CONGRESS TO SETTLE

Regular Money Budgets.
Army and Navy Deficiency Bill.
Increase of the Regular Army.
Disposition of Hawaii.
Nicaragua Canal.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—The curtain will ring up to-morrow at noon upon the closing session of the Fifty-fifth Congress. The war and the fruits of the American victory carry in their wake many problems which the National Legislature must solve.

But though many questions may press for solution, the brief space covered by this session, which expires by limitation March 4, precludes the possibility of much being accomplished beyond the passage of the regular money budgets, the legislation for the increase of the regular army which the Administration deems necessary to meet the obligations imposed upon the country by the result of the war, and probably the enactment of a law to give a permanent territorial government to the Hawaiian Islands.

Nicaragua Canal May Be Exception.

This covers all the important legislation which the Congressional leaders expect to see enacted at this session. It is almost the unanimous sentiment of the leaders that no attempt should be made to legislate concerning the possessions acquired by the war with Spain at this session.

There are earnest advocates of the Nicaraguan Canal bill who will strive to secure its passage now, and they may possibly be successful; but neither it nor any of the measures like the pooling bill, anti-scalpers bill, etc., which have strong friends, will be allowed to interfere with the bills the passage of which is deemed absolutely necessary to prevent an extra session.

The leaders at both ends of the Capitol have put their heads together and the work of the session is to be entered upon with the idea of avoiding an extra session. With this purpose in view the appropriation bills are to be given the road at both ends of the Capitol and pressed through with all possible haste.

Will Shut Off Debate on the War.

Two sub-committees of the Appropriations Committee of the House have been at work for a week. The deficiency bill, to meet the extraordinary expenses of the army and navy during the six months from January 1, 1898, to July 1, is ready to be submitted to the full committee to-morrow, and the regular District of Columbia appropriation bill will be ready by the end of the week.

It is necessary that the former should become a law before the holiday recess, which this year is to be shorter than usual, and Chairman Cannon hopes to see it through the House and into the Senate before the end of the present week. The Democrats of the House have not disclosed their position, but it is not believed they will seek to obstruct an appropriation bill necessary for the maintenance of the army now in the field.

Should there be a disposition to open up and prolong a debate upon the conduct of the war upon this bill, it is safe to assume that the Committee on Rules will be invoked to bring in an order to close debate.

Eager for the President's Message.

Intense interest is manifested in the President's message, which will be submitted to Congress to-morrow, on account of the great importance of the many questions it will have to deal with. No Presidential message in years, it is safe to say, has been listened to with the eagerness and interest with which the reading of President McKinley's message will be heard.

The reading of the message will occupy probably two hours. The first thing in order after Speaker Reed calls the House to order to-morrow will be a call of the roll to determine the presence of a quorum. Concerning this there is little doubt, as the members are arriving by every train and the hotel lobbies are already thronged.

A quorum having been developed committees will be appointed to wait upon the President and the Senate to inform them that the House is ready to proceed to business.

Pending the arrival of the President's message several new members elected to fill vacancies caused by deaths or resignations will be sworn in, and immediately after the reading of the message is completed the House will adjourn out of respect to the memory of Messrs. Love, of Mississippi, and Northway, of Ohio, who died during the recess.

To Work by Tuesday or Wednesday.

On Tuesday, or Wednesday at the latest, the House will plunge into its work. Chairman Cannon will have the Deficiency bill ready, and it will occupy the attention of the House to the exclusion of everything else for the remainder of the week.

Senators Want No Extra Session.

Senators express a determination to take up the work of the session vigorously in the beginning, with the hope of having it well advanced before the holidays, and they are counting upon taking up the appropriation bills at a very early date for the purpose of preventing an extra session, due to any failure on the part of the national budget.

It is expected that the Army Deficiency bill will reach the Senate the present week, the understanding at the north end of the Capitol being that the House will dispose of it within a very few days after assembling.

The Committee on Appropriations will bring it in early for the double purpose of having it passed quickly and of testing the feeling of Senators on questions connected with the war.

Work on Hand if Senate Is Ready.

The first day's session will be given up almost entirely to the President's message, and there is great interest manifested in hearing the minutest details of the President's recommendations. After the reading of the message, the Senate will adjourn until the next day. All plans for legislation of general scope will wait the promulgation of this document and, as a consequence, one hears far less than usual of measures to be introduced.

It is impossible to say what matters will occupy the week after the disposal of the message, but it is probable that some speeches may be delivered upon the policy indicated by the message, and also that the calendar may be taken up. There are many measures which have been reported, and there will be no difficulty to find employment, if the Senate is disposed to settle to routine so early in the session.

Must Discuss Canal in Senate.

During the closing days of the last session Senator Morgan gave notice of his intention to call up the Nicaragua canal bill at the beginning of the present session. He unquestionably will redeem this promise and would doubtless seek the first opportunity but for the possibility of change of sentiment in favor of having the Government undertake the entire responsibility of building the canal.

All the indications are that this question will be one of the most prominent subjects under consideration during the session.

Opposition is developing to the bill which the Hawaiian commission will bring in and for which early consideration will be asked. There is a considerable contingent in the Senate opposed to constituting the islands into a Territory because of the apprehension that they may be converted into a State and deliberate consideration of the subject will be asked.

While it is quite too early to reach a definite conclusion there are decided indications of a disposition on the part of the Senate to confine the session's work to routine measures and the appropriation bills, and it need surprise no one if the close of the session should demonstrate that this general policy had been pursued.

FLAMES FEAST ON TWO SKY-SCRAPERS==HIGHEST BLAZE EVER FOUGHT IN NEW YORK.

Home Life and Postal Telegraph Buildings Catch from the Rogers-Peet Store.

Work for the Fire Fighters Nearly Two Hundred Feet from Broadway Pavement.

Explosion Started the Conflagration, and Others Caused Volcanic Eruptions of Sparks.

Greatest fire in New York occurred December 16-17, in Pearl street; 650 buildings burned; loss \$20,000,000.
Highest fire in New York, on December 4, 1898, destroyed upper floors of Home Life Insurance Company, No. 259 Broadway.
Fire burned 150 feet above the sidewalk; could not be reached by firemen.
Flames ascended the spire of building 250 feet from the ground, burning through alleged fireproof doors.
Chief Bonner's estimate of loss in last night's fire, \$1,000,000.

THE most spectacular of the res New York has seen for a long time was that which destroyed the building at the southwest corner of Broadway and Warren streets, occupied by Rogers, Peet & Co., last night.

The flames also attacked the Home Life Insurance Company's sky-scraper building adjoining and the building of the United States Life Insurance Company at No. 261 Broadway, directly across the street.

The damage to the Home Life Insurance Building, which is a thirteen-story structure, was very great.

The structure in which the fire started—that occupied by Rogers, Peet & Co.—blazed like a mountainous tar barrel. The flames, fanned by a gale driving the rain along at the rate of sixty miles an hour, licked the sides of the tall insurance structure and a big air shaft running up the side of the building made a perfect chimney for the smoke and sparks.

Windows on the north side of the Home Life Building were embraced by the fire which entered at the seventh floor and travelled to the eleventh, igniting all the intervening floors.

Biggest Sky Scrapper Fire Yet.

It was one of the first important fires that New York firemen have had to contend against in the upper part of a modern fire proofed sky scraper. It had been assumed that in the Home Life building a fire could not travel from one floor to another, owing to the fireproofing arrangements. But five floors were lighted at once from a source that had not been looked upon as dangerous—a neighboring building.

It was a ticklish situation for the firemen to battle with a blaze on the eleventh floor, high above the sidewalk—a spot which, at the least, was hard enough to reach—and all their energies were needed to cope with two other fires already in full blast.

From the Home Life Building the flames passed to the big structure of the Postal Telegraph Company next door, and the top floor was quickly ablaze. The telegraph operators were driven out in a panic—a repetition of their experience four months ago, when there was a fire in the Home Life Building itself.

Discovery of the Blaze.

The fire was noticed first at 9:50 p. m. by Policemen Everett and O'Brien, who heard two explosions at the base of the Rogers, Peet & Co. Building, on the Warren street side, fifty feet from Broadway. They thought a boiler burst under the sidewalk. The next moment the entire front of the building became a mass of flames.

The alarm was barely turned in when the whole place was alight. Fire came from every window, the roof burned through and the blaze climbed up the side of the big Home Life Building, which towered above. The howling East wind sent the sparks and the flames into the windows, igniting the floors and the furniture.

It was an ordeal for two fireproof buildings, for the Rogers & Peet headquarters was of the old-fashioned fireproof style. Yet it burned so fiercely that there was no hope of saving anything. All the firemen could do was to save the Home Insurance and other nearby structures.

The whole street was a furnace. Sparks and flames leaped across the road and set fire to the United States Life Insurance Company's building at No. 261 Broadway, the ground floor of which is occupied by Thomas Cook & Sons, tourist agents. As fast as one blazing window sash was extinguished another caught.

Terrific Heat in the Streets.

In Warren street the heat was terrific. Firemen who worked there were singed and burned, and buried in sparks. Fire alarms had filled Broadway with engines, hose carts, water towers and insurance salvage men, working heroically against what looked like fearful odds.

The Rogers & Peet Building was the target for the bombardment of water, as the only hope of saving the Home Life structure consisted in making the fire in the other place burn as slowly as possible. It was impossible to put it out. It had to burn out.

It was not possible for a long time to do much toward putting out the separate fires which had started in the Home Life Building. It took time to get the hose to the upper stories, and when they were there it was a case of fighting flame in a dozen places at once.

Not Under Control Midnight.

At midnight the fire in the Home Insurance Building was not under control. Parts of burning floors had fallen through upon the floors below. The whole building was deluged with water.

"The water is being pumped all right up to the top floor," said Chief Bonner, "and we are fighting hard, but I will not say that we have won the fight."

There was some fear that the huge ornamental cornice on the roof would fall into the street. It had been loosened by the flames.

Chief Bonner was alarmed at the danger from a stock of explosives in a gun store in Warren street. Fortunately a falling wall made a barricade and prevented the fire from reaching them. This was at 11:10 o'clock, when the third floor and wall of the Rogers, Peet building collapsed.

The fire officials thought that the explosions, if there were any, were caused by accumulations of illuminating gas.



The Home Life Building, Seen from Park Row.

The spectacular features of the fire were remarkable, and seldom have artists witnessed more wonderful contrasts in high light and deep shadow. Even the above striking picture but weakly conveys an impression of the reality in the blaze of last night.

FIRE IN THE BIG BUILDINGS NEAR BY.

Terrific Struggle to Save the United States Life Insurance Offices.

The entire front of the United States Life Insurance Company's building, at No. 261 Broadway, seemed to catch fire at once. Six lines of hose were dragged into the building by firemen, who forced open office doors and poured the water into the burning rooms. They managed to check the fire in the building, and finally succeeded in making their way to the escapes, where they were able to direct the hose on the burning Rogers, Peet & Co. building.

The Home Life building caught fire by easy stages. At about a quarter to 11 o'clock all the windows on the north side were ablaze. It is a steel structure, and is one of the first of its kind to be put to such a test of fire. The flames soared through the building on the twelfth floor, and the sparks poured down in a thick shower to the bottom of the elevator shaft. The firemen were sent up into the building with three lines of hose, which they stretched to the upper floors, but by 11:35 p. m. the fire had made great headway and the firemen seemed absolutely unable to conquer it.

The waves of flame beating against the northern wall of the Home Life building overflowed through the windows at every point. The firemen had devoted their utmost efforts to prevent this. The flames burst the basement back for a time.

The rear of the building was a roaring furnace from the seventh story to the top.

Hidden from View.

The flames worked their way forward, but the view from Broadway gave no indication for a long time of the extent of the destruction in the upper floors of this building.

The twelfth floor showed flames behind five windows at 11 o'clock. Half an hour later the fourteenth floor windows shot forth flames.

The Postal building's topmost floor was still at work on the lower floors of the Home Life Building, the janitor and four firemen attempted to ascend in one of the elevators.

Elevator Drops.

The machinery had only lifted them a few feet from the ground when something far aloft gave way. They fell back, but no one of the five was hurt.

The firemen said that the Rogers, Peet

building was a complete wreck before the first of them came splashing up through the mud puddles. The Broadway cable line lay for some weeks left a gully about four feet deep in the street in front of the Rogers, Peet building. It made the manipulation of the engines exceedingly difficult.

As the whole interior of the building became thoroughly saturated with the blaze the flames burst out through the windows on the Warren street side in great puffs of red and yellow that made the electric lights in City Hall Park seem pale by comparison.

North Wall Falls.

Through the blazing roof letters and papers from the offices in the building were carried up into the wild, dripping night. The crowd of thousands of people which stood under umbrellas in the park had begun to disperse under the idea that the fire was over when the group of firemen nearest to the Warren street wall suddenly let go the hose nozzle and ran back, leaving the hose to sputter on the ground. For a moment people wondered at the cause of their action, but only for a moment.

With a slow, prolonged crackle and crunch the north wall fell in a heap of blazing masses that shimmered and sizzled in Warren street.

Acting Chief Perley, of Truck No. 1, was closest to the wall when it fell. In his flight his foot slipped in a wet gutter and he dropped to the pavement. Nobody saw him again until after the wall was buried. His comrades thought that he was buried under the ruins, but Perley emerged smiling from the gutter and said, "I am all right, boys; go back and fight the fire."

Cable Cars Ducked.

Long lines of cable cars, packed with people, were blocked along Broadway. Many who were not passengers added to the jam of the cars in their efforts to seek a place of shelter from the downpour of rain.

The sixth floor of the Postal Telegraph Building was wrecked by flames, following a terrific explosion, which shook the building from foundation to roof, at about 2 o'clock on July 4. There were two distinct reports.

The explosion was in the office occupied by the Whitehead & Hoag Manufacturing Company, on the sixth floor, in the extreme western end of the building, where there was stored a large quantity of buttons, collars, cuffs and other articles made of celluloid.

The offices on the sixth floor of the Postal Building were practically destroyed by that fire. The total loss to the tenants was

about \$50,000 by fire and water and many near-by buildings were also damaged.

CROWDS IN THE PARK VIEW THE SPECTACLE.

If it had been arranged as a spectacle, nothing could have been more complete, save for the weather. City Hall Park was a generous proscenium. At first the on-lookers were content to cluster in the Mall, directly opposite the doomed store. Then, finding themselves inconveniently cramped, they spilled over the wire fence into the lawn flanking it on the south.

For once a New York multitude shed its timorous fear of officialdom. Last Summer's grass and this Winter's snow were cheerfully trodden into a soft mat, with the rain, they formed a sticky quagmire able deep. But no one paid any attention to creature discomforts while so brave a sight could be watched without interference.

It was not a sight to tire of easily, for the interest was wondrously sustained. The earliest comers were fortunate in seeing the progress of the Rogers-Peet blaze, which was so swift and absolute that in itself it would have been well worth a wetting to follow to the end.

There was nothing subtle or problematical about the Rogers-Peet end of the spectacle. It was a more question of a comparatively small building, stuffed from cellar to roof with rich fire food, flaring up in grand combustion, while a fierce and capricious wind had great bunches of flame into eddies and whirlpools of crimson. The streams of water that curved toward the furnace and were lost in a swirl of steam and smoke as they reached it gave the impression of toy hose directed by children at play.

Was a Satisfying View.

It was a satisfying view one got from the quagmire. One looked through the empty window gaps into a writhing mass of flames, against which the metal rafters of the various floors stood out a black latticework. But it was the north side—the Warren street side—of the building that attracted all attention at that time. It was from there that the outpour of flames was largest and most portentous.

It was noticed that three or four streams of water were turned upon the side of the building across the street—the square, red brick building with the gilded sign of the United States Insurance Company on the third floor. Up and down and across the water flared in windows and walls, and so heated were they that clouds of steam drifted from them and mingled with the smoke of the fire.

Over every window of that building was a gayly striped awning of canvas. They fluttered, these awnings, in the draught from the burning building, and drooped